Fact Sheet

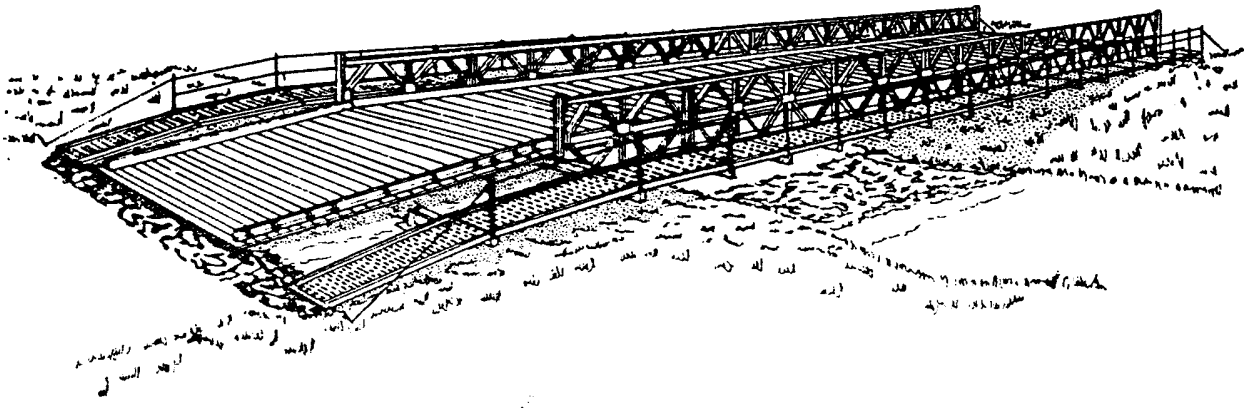
CONSTRUCTION OF A BAILEY BRIDGE: CHATANIKA RIVER, ALASKA

PROBLEM

The Caribou-Poker Creeks Research Watershed in Chatanika, Alaska, is a vital research site for the U.S. Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, the USDA Forest Service, and the University of Alaska–Fairbanks. However, researchers could reach the watershed only by fording the Chatanika River, which was possible only during optimal river conditions. Year-round access was badly needed.

SOLUTION

CRREL entered into an agreement with the Forest Service to construct a bridge across the river. The agreement called for CRREL to obtain a Bailey bridge and oversee construction; the Forest Service provided funds and obtained the necessary permits. The University of Alaska–Fairbanks furnished some equipment and allowed the use of nearby facilities. CRREL asked the 23rd Engineer Company at Fort Richardson, Alaska, to participate in construction of the bridge. The combat heavy engineers eagerly accepted the challenge. In conjunction with the project they underwent an external evaluation of their performance in an operation-other-than-war (OOTW) scenario in which a third-world country experiences a severe earthquake and requests U.S. aid. The Engineers' mission was to rebuild a bridge, thus restoring a major transportation artery, while being sub-jected to harassment and attack by minority elements of hostile native demonstrators and rebel forces.



RESULTS

Construction of the 150-foot double-double Bailey bridge was completed on 1 August 1995. The engineers upgraded one mile of road, placed concrete abutments, and prepared the stream banks, which entailed removal of 10,000 cubic yards of material.

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September 1995

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